

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for Policy Development Process

What is the timing and process for adopting these principle statements?

The goal is to have them approved by the Board this fall so that they can "go live" at the end of the year. The federal Congressional cycle is calendar based, so having a platform ready by the start of a new year is ideal. We anticipate widespread agreement on the majority of these principles and the timeline is reflective of that. However, we recognize that there may be some principles and issue areas on which there are more diverse perspectives among the membership, and therefore, it may be harder to arrive at broad-based consensus.

If there are any issues that require additional time, those will be taken up on an "as needed" basis. The timeline is not intended to curtail discussion about any of the issues addressed in the framework.

Why are we developing these principle statements and for what purpose?

The statements under the issue areas, which form a policy framework, can be thought of as ASM's policy "constitution." Without *internal alignment* on what we stand for as a scientific society, we cannot advocate *externally* to key audiences. These principles will serve as the foundational elements of ASM's policy program, with action on specific policies and positions on specific legislation tied back to them. To learn more about the process, [watch the webinar here](#) before taking the survey.

Why is this process taking place now?

In 2018, the ASM Board of Directors approved an Advocacy Roadmap, which called for the development of a robust policy and advocacy program at ASM. The program has three pillars: policy development, policymaker outreach, and grassroots engagement. To build a policy framework that would form the foundation for all other policy and advocacy efforts, a Task Force was appointed. The Task Force has met regularly for almost a year, and the draft principles are a product of an intensive, iterative process. After months of development and consideration, the draft principles are ready for input.

Will the principle statements be revised following member input?

Yes. The draft principle statements are just that-- drafts. The overall process can be broken down into 5 phases. Phase 1 was the development of the statements by the Policy Development Task Force members to guide our work on legislation and policy. These bullet points are designed to be "high level," so that they can take into account the interests of a very diverse field and membership. They also are written to have enough specificity so that they are meaningful and provide direction for ASM's policy efforts.

Phase 2 is the process of getting feedback, which we are in right now. Once the feedback from the ASM leadership and broader membership is received, we will move to Phase 3, in which the Policy Development Task Force, the Public and Scientific Affairs Committee, and the Board will consider

all comments, revise and refine the statements accordingly, finalize them, and ultimately, ratify them.

Will revisions to the principles be considered before the end of the formal feedback process?

Yes. The comments received through the survey tool are read carefully and considered as they come in. When we have seen several comments come in that focus on one particular bullet and when the concerns expressed are all very similar, we have proposed revisions and reposted the bullet accordingly, rather than wait until all feedback is received. Therefore, members who have already completed the survey process may see some changes already reflected in the draft principles that are posted in the survey.

Are the principle statements listed in any deliberate order?

No. The statements listed under a given issue area are not listed in any particular order. In other words, the order you see in the survey does **not** reflect prioritization. However, building a public policy program speaks to the need for prioritizing issues, and we expect that will happen through the regular ASM governance channels, through the Public and Scientific Affairs Committee, and in consultation with ASM staff. These principles are meant to be foundational so that more detailed work can stem from the overarching framework.

What if there is not consensus among the membership on a particular principle or statement?

While one can expect that members of a Society as large and diverse as ASM are not going to agree on every policy position, it is important that the principles reflect **broad-based consensus** among our diverse Society membership, and that they can be supported as much as possible by most members. Transparency and openness is key to building a successful advocacy program for members, which is why this feedback process is so important.

Therefore, should the feedback process reveal significant differences of opinion or outright conflicts over particular positions within the membership, the Policy Development Task Force, PSAC, and the Board will take this under serious consideration and determine how and/or whether to move forward with that particular statement.

Are these geared to just U.S.-centric, domestic policies?

ASM is a global society and research in the microbial sciences is an international endeavor. After all, microbes know no borders. These statements, wherever possible, are written with a global perspective in mind because it is important, when developing our policy framework, to consider not only the United States, but also global implications and how policies affect the field everywhere. We recognize some funding-specific statements focus on U.S. agencies and programs, and in doing so, we recognize the leadership role and "standard bearer" status of scientific and public health agencies like the National Institutes of Health, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the National Science Foundation.